

PRESS RELEASE

FROM: National Court Appointed Special Advocates Association
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CHILD ADVOCATES OF INDIANAPOLIS RECEIVE NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR DEDICATION TO DIVERSITY

On March 20 2011, the National Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) Association will honor the Child Advocates of Indianapolis with the National CASA Inclusion Award at their 30th Annual National CASA Conference in Chicago, IL.

The program's passionate dedication to increasing diversity among advocates was one of the significant reasons for Child Advocates of Indianapolis' selection for this the honor. The program is committed to identifying ways to better serve the diverse population of children in need in Indianapolis.



The Child Advocates of Indianapolis will receive the National CASA Inclusion Award in March.

“Child Advocates is addressing a relevant and widespread issue head on, and is seeing positive results,” says Leslie Dunn, Indiana State Director of CASA. “The program is being awarded for its dedication to bringing advocacy to every abused and neglected child.”

Indiana has a significantly high number of African American children in foster care, and as the largest child advocacy program in the state's urban center, Child Advocates brought the issue of racial disparity in child welfare to the forefront of their priorities, adopting a challenging Inclusiveness and Diversity plan. Child Advocates partnered with the Juvenile Court Judge and many others to amplify their efforts. The program has made the commitment to ongoing training and focus on racial disparity. Since the plan's implementation, Child Advocates has doubled the number of African American volunteers with their organization, added 16 African American staff members to full and part-time positions, and reduced the waiting list of children, many of whom are African American, by over 600.

“We are proud of the passion for child advocacy and equality from our local and state chapters across the country,” said Michael Piraino, CEO of the National CASA Association. “Child Advocates exemplifies what it means to be truly inclusive, and dedicated to the well-being of children of all backgrounds.”

About National CASA

In 1977, a Seattle judge conceived the idea of using trained community volunteers to speak for the best interests of these children in court, helping to ensure that they will live in a safe and loving environment. The Seattle program was so successful that judges across the country began utilizing citizen advocates, as well. Now, National CASA and its network of over 1,050 local community program offices work to recruit, train and facilitate volunteers in their work with abused children. National CASA, together with its state and local members, promote and support court-appointed volunteer advocacy for abused and neglected children so that they can thrive in safe, permanent homes.

For more information about Child Advocates of Indianapolis and the Inclusion Award, please contact Jim Clune at (800) 628-3233, Ext. 249; or e-mail Jim at jclune@nationalcasa.org For more information about the National CASA Association, please view our website at CASAforChildren.org.

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